

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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ETIQA'S FREE PAP SMEAR PROGRAMME SUPPORTS THE GOVERNMENT AGENDA OF INCREASING CERVICAL CANCER SCREENING FOR UNDERPRIVILEGED WOMEN

Kuala Lumpur – Etiqa, through its partnership with the National Cancer Society of Malaysia (NCSM), is pushing the Government's agenda of achieving higher cervical cancer screening rates for underprivileged women in Malaysia, through its free pap smear programme for 3000 women aged 21 and above. Since the launch in November last year, 800 women from around the country have already been screened. This is in line with addressing YAB Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail's statement recently where she announced that Malaysia has only managed to achieve a rate of 12.9 per cent for cervical screening, a figure that falls short of the World Health Organisation's target of 70 per cent.

The low rate of cervical cancer screening in Malaysia is impacting the survival rates of women. In a study by Malaysian Study on Cancer Survival 2018 (MySCan) on patients diagnosed with cervical cancer between 2007 and 2011, it was found that compared with some of its neighbouring countries in Asia, the survival rates for Malaysian women was lower.

In the same report it was found that the five year survival rate for these women was at 75.3 per cent for Stage 1, 52.3 per cent for Stage 2, 32.1 per cent for Stage 3 and 23 per cent for Stage 4. Reinforcing the need for cervical cancer to be detected at an earlier stage for a higher chance of survival.

"As a leading local insurance and takaful operator in the country, Etiqa is proud to play an active role in supporting the Government's vision of seeing more women aware of the perils of cervical cancer, and taking steps towards getting themselves screened. Our organizational culture is about making things Fast & Easy, whether it is to purchase, submit claims or receive payouts. And we are extending this philosophy to the community by letting the women know that getting screened for cervical cancer is just as Fast & Easy with transportation and screenings being provided for free, and results are shared soon after," said Siti Hafizah Mohd Zahrom, Head of Corporate Social Responsibility at Etiqa.

"Partnerships between NGOs and corporations can be a powerful tool, as our collaboration with Etiqa has proven. Since 2017, we have made a tremendous impact on the lives of thousands of underprivileged women around Malaysia, in addressing the state of their health. Together with Etiqa, we will be reaching out to even more underprivileged women around the country this year through the free pap smear programme," said Viji Nair, NCSM's Senior Project Manager.

Early detection is the reason why former model and Miss Malaysia, Genevieve Sambhi, is here to tell her story. Ten years ago she was diagnosed with Stage 2 cervical cancer after a routine pap smear. She went through surgery, painful chemotherapy and radiation sessions, and as a survivor creates awareness whenever and wherever she can on the importance of pap smears. "I have been given a second chance, and I feel that it is my duty to inform and build awareness to others about cervical cancer. If I had not gone for my pap smear, I would not have found out early enough to be here today. No woman should have to go through what I did, and I urge all women to overcome any hesitation they might feel to come forward to get tested for cervical cancer," she said.

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The free pap smears provided by Etiqa for the underprivileged is part of Etiqa's Free Mammogram and Free Pap Smear Programme in partnership with NCSM. The programme is worth RM2.85 million and addresses Malaysian women's health by providing 6000 free breast cancer screening for underprivileged women, aged 40 and above, as well as 3000 free cervical cancer screening for underprivileged women aged 21 and above under Etiqa Cares, Etiqa's flagship corporate responsibility commitment towards healthy living.

NCSM works with local communities and NGOs across the country to identify underprivileged women for this programme. Eligible women and interested community leaders are encouraged to call Angela or Dina from NCSM at 03-2698 7300 for more enquiries on the free mammogram and free pap smear programme.

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About Etiqa

Etiqa is a true multi-channel distributor of Insurance and Takaful products via its 10,000 agency force, 24 Insurance and Takaful branches, more than 350 Maybank branches, ATMs and other third-party banks, providing full accessibility and total convenience to customers in Malaysia. Regionally, we have expanded our wings and set up base in Singapore, the Philippines and also Indonesia.

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About National Cancer Society Malaysia

The National Cancer Society Malaysia (NCSM), also known as Persatuan Kebangsaan Kanser Malaysia, is the first not-for-profit cancer organisation in Malaysia that provides education, care and support services for people affected by cancer. Over the last 50 years, it provides holistic cancer support to patients and caregivers. NCSM supports patients in understanding and dealing with cancer in various phases through its five cancer centres – the Cancer and Health Screening Clinic, Nuclear Medicine Centre, Resource and Wellness Centre, Quit Smoking Clinic and the Children's Home of Hope and has branches in six states, i.e. Johor, Negeri Sembilan, Melaka, Perak, Penang and Sarawak. For cancer information and support, please call 1 800 08 1000.

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